

Operational Support Airlift (OSA)

The Marine Corps presently operates four different types of aircraft to fill its Operational Support Airlift (OSA) requirements: the C-9 Skytrain, UC-12 King Air, C-20G Gulfstream IV, and UC-35 Citation. OSA aircraft provide air logistics support to our warfighters by moving high priority passengers and cargo between and within theaters of operation. OSA aircraft carry out short-notice, time-critical, logistical air movements, relieving front-line tactical squadrons from this necessary, but non-tactical, mission. By freeing our tactical aircraft assets from routine missions, OSA aircraft are an effective combat multiplier for the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF), joint force, and regional combatant commander.

Below are recent examples (by type of aircraft) that illustrate Marine Corps OSA's relevance to the Global War on Terrorism:

C-9: Provided airlift support to MAGTF-8, the lead element of a multinational interim force following the resignation of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004; and, transported Marine Corps forces and equipment to and from southwest Asia.

UC-12: Deployed to Kuwait and Iraq in support of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) during Operation Iraqi Freedom, where these aircraft delivered key combat personnel and more than 70,000 pounds of critical cargo in support of the Marine forces; and, provided airlift support to MAGTF-8.

C-20G: During the opening months of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Marine Corps C-20G (based at MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI) forward-deployed to Bahrain in support of Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) and the warfighters in theater. This aircraft continues to provide frequent global airlift support.



UC-35: Transported critically needed Combat Air Patrol (CAP) pilots throughout the United States to their respective bases, immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. During this period, civilian aircraft were precluded from flying in the continental United States. Marine Corps UC-35's are currently forward-deployed in southwest Asia.

In the continental United States, Marine Corps OSA provides support to MAGTF combined exercises, such as Desert Talon, in addition to joint airlift support coordinated by US TRANSCOM. The incorporation of OSA into MAGTF exercises relieves participating tactical squadrons from much of the exercise-associated administrative logistical airlift requirements. This, in turn, enables the tactical squadrons to focus more time and resources on combat-related flight training.

Acquisition of relatively low-cost, commercial-off-the-shelf aircraft with minimal militarization provides MAGTF commanders swift, on-demand support. Current initiatives will ensure the availability of short-notice, time-critical, logistical air support using more capable aircraft fully integrated into Marine Corps operations.